

THE LISTENER IN THE CHURCH

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THE LISTENER IN THE CHURCH

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THE LISTENER IN THE CHURCH

BY
A WORKINGMAN



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CHAPTER I.

THE HUMAN MIND.

THE human mind, roughly speaking, is like a vast picture gallery where pictures are hung of what the individual has seen, acted, learned, heard, and experienced. All of this is classified by his memory, has influenced his way of thinking, and developed his reason. When the listener comes into the presence of the speaker it is with the greeting, "My mental residence is at your disposal; enter and take possession." The speaker's words, personality and character then proceed to hang up new pictures in the mind of the listener. The preacher is a worker and the listener's

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mind the material which he wishes to affect. He desires that he may suggest the higher life and create a desire to attain it.

The listener also has come for the purpose of getting in contact with the higher life. If he had expected that irritation and uncongeniality awaited him, he would not have come. The average listener has come from the cares and perplexities of life and work. God has so created the human mind that relaxation is necessary. After work and attention the mind craves ease and joy.

With a few exceptions the average preacher has before him the same people at every meeting. But for these people, who come regularly, Sunday after Sunday, year in and year out, he would have no congregation. The vast majority of these people need cheer and not scolding, need joy and not always the ascetic theology, need inspiration, and visions born of gladness, and not so much of the

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coldness and stiffness which is acquired by sitting down in an introspective mood.

Beginning very early in life, the human mind is constantly active. Every minute of the day the mind is engaged. Without activity the mind can not develop, nor the individual feel at ease. Enforced inactivity, therefore, brings mental discomfort—a feeling as if you are alone in a strange land. Sometimes the speaker is the only one who enjoys the church service, because he being active is possessed with a feeling of well-being. There is not much benefit in the church service where the speaker does not grip the hearer's mind, where there is no reciprocity, where the listener's mind is inactive. Inactivity accomplishes nothing. Enforced mental inactivity produces feelings of aversion and dissatisfaction. When a man joins an ordinary church and does not become active in any of its efforts, his only source of usefulness being in listening to sermons which the preacher has gotten up in his

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library—such a man soon loses interest, because there is no interest for his mind to grip. The good speaker's success lies in his power to occupy the listener's mind in a pleasant, interesting way.

The mind is displeased with monotony. Many sermons sound like a mixture of some theological book and articles from some religious paper, embracing thoughts which one who is in the habit of attending church has heard the substance of hundred's of times before. And on one who is not in the habit of attending church a dry theological sermon produces only a feeling of disdain. I know a man who attended church service one Sunday, where the preacher was a fresh graduate from a theological seminary, his sermon lasting nearly two hours, and dull to the extreme. Could it be expected that this man, who is not a church member, should have a desire to attend church again the next Sunday? Twenty years have passed, and this man has never entered a church since. The

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monotonous speaker suggests the atmosphere of the barren desert; and men have no desire to go to a place on a bright Sunday morning to feel the effect of desolation and emptiness. The week's work in store or shop—the old routine—leaves a foggy dark coat on the mind of the average working man. On the day of rest he does not want more monotony. The laws of his being require a man to seek mental sunshine in his resting hour.

There is too much sameness in the average worker's life. Most people are compelled to do the same work over and over again, day in and day out. There is lack of newness. System and routine are the prevailing style of work. Commercialism cuts out a man's work for him to make him a specialist, a machine. To many a worker life looks like a cold vice in which he is clamped. Under such conditions the mind grows morbid, and in its craving for variation and gladness, monotonous

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church services repel instead of attract. Physicians tell us that women bear monotony better than men. With them the agonies of ennui are not so soon developed and do not depress so heavily. This may be one reason why women predominate at church services.

New landscapes please the eye. New food gives zest to appetite. New inventions are as a message from a new country. The Bible is the most optimistic and cheerful book in the world, telling about a new life, a new heaven, and a new earth.

The mind is a kingdom where the individual is czar, absolute. While listening, the hearer examines the speaker's motives and weighs his statements. Ordinarily the listener is willing to open his mind to the higher life, but he wishes to see it. Christianity can not be taught by words alone. Some preachers have about them an atmosphere of force; being "bookish" and dull, they constantly abuse their listener's patience,

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and yet they want results; consequently they resort to force in the form of exhorting, commanding, and scolding. Countries may be taken by force and people's whipped into submission by cannon and sabers. Not so the kingdom of the mind. A preacher ceases to be a minister when he becomes a commander.

The mind is hungry for thoughts superior, the individual taking into his character things of his choice, which seem to him the true. A desire to be like Christ is not forced into a man's mind. A preacher can not expect a response to his appeal after he has irritated his hearer. There are many preachers whose labors create but an atmosphere of rebellion.

A man is not incited to imbibe higher things when he is commanded so to do. Desires are not hammered into a man's mind. Nobody likes to be bossed. No man is a Christian because it is his sad and solemn duty to be one, or because it was forced upon him.

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The human mind is God-given. The individual may live in wickedness, may spend his time in wrong living, disbelieve in God, and yet at moments the godly qualities of truth, justice, love, purity and unselfishness may appeal to him contrary to his beliefs. A story is told of a hardened criminal in prison who refused to listen to preacher or any one talking religion, but one day when a little child with the stamp of God on her face came in and offered him a flower, he immediately surrendered his fortress of unbelief. This illustrates how minds are appealed to and won. People go to church to see and feel something godly; to see something of the Christian spirit, to absorb something of the higher life. But if the sermon is a "discourse," an essay, or a flood of words about theology, it then burdens the listener instead of helping him.

Being orderly, active, and self-governing, the mind has an aim, which is: ease, well-being, and contentment. The child,

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seeing other children at play, noticing their happy faces, and hearing their merry laughter, becomes possessed with a desire to take part, and upon joining, his whole being, mental and physical, is taken up with a feeling of well-being and delight which comes from rational activity—activity which acts as a tonic to health and development. The youth, fascinated in his world of love, sees in his ideal something of the divine, hears in her voice a melody of more charm than has ever caught his ear before. Indeed, the road is short that leads to where his heart's hunger is satisfied. And thus through life our hearts direct our steps. Where pleasantness and congeniality await us, to such places our desires are apt to take us. Many preachers make it hard for their hearers to love the church service.

God has so created the human mind that it craves activity, hates monotony, and repels force—laws of the mind which the average preacher never seems

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to take into consideration. People stay away from churches because long, monotonous sermons make listening painful. No one has a desire to go to a place where his mind is irritated. The preacher has no right to make Christianity unattractive by dull, monotonous services. People listening to a long, pedantic, literary sermon fail to see any Christianity in it—fail to see the character of Christ represented by it, and go away from such a “service” feeling that the time spent there adds to the burden of life instead of easing the load.

The secret of the good minister’s success is in that he creates an atmosphere of enthusiasm and good fellowship. He surcharges the room with good feeling. The listener feels at home. He takes the listener with him and shows him the good things he has seen and felt.

The leading current in the average individual’s mind is a desire for happiness. The everyday life of the worker has its cares, and during his moments of

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leisure he wishes for relaxation and pleasantness. This is the state of a healthy mind; a desire for gloom is unnatural and ungodly and adds to the darkness of life. Instead the worker needs cheer to refresh his mind and make his memory a good companion for the hardship during the week.

The average Christian goes to church because it is the only public place where he cares to go. Worldly amusements have no attractions for him. He goes to church because he likes to be there—to enjoy the pleasures of fellowship, service, and sacrifice—to get inspiration from song and sermon—to take into his mind thoughts from above. Not that the church is his only source of inspiration, but it is natural that people crave to get away from their homes and meet other people; and he has found that Christian people are the best people on earth.

There may be a few people in the evangelical churches who seek their joy in worldly amusements. The church to

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them is a department of religion—something to be endured but not enjoyed. A great many preachers also attend theaters, and kindred worldly amusements, and spending their week days in leisure, and then at church meetings they hold forth in sad, phlegmatic tones, scolding their listeners. Such preachers have their sadness in the Lord and their joy in the world. There is not enough joy in the world. The church should not be a sad house. The angel of the annunciation cried, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." The inaugural miracle of Jesus was wrought at a wedding to enhance its innocent joy. And in his parting words to his disciples he said: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." God has so created the human mind that it needs joy. Christianity should help make life easier, not harder, should help make life brighter, not darker, happier and not sadder.

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Sunday is the only day the worker has to react from the irritation and hardship of the week's work. His mind demands pleasantness in order that he may preserve mental health; the God whom we worship has so created the human mind that joy is necessary to health and well-being. It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. It is godly to put cheer into human minds. It is ungodly to preach, if preaching darkens the mind and oppresses the wayfaring worker. The church in its services should practice the one-hundreth psalm. It is no sin to seek joy. To seek unselfish happiness and add to the happiness of other people is the desire of every well-developed individual. The average worker meets with much to darken his mind during the week, and he is not looking for more on Sunday. People are not in need of lectures. The preacher will always say that the church is a place for worship. Here is where people come to adore the Deity

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and to meditate on their shortcomings. But the average Christian preaches better fitting sermons to himself than any minister can; and God does not want to be adored like a heathen idol. The time now is that the true worshipper will honor God with his thoughts, actions and work. There is something wrong with a joyless religion and its professor. The true lover is not sad, and he who is in love with God—the source of unselfish love and goodness—cannot be sad.

There is too much unnecessary sadness among Christian people. It is a part of the work of the church to make for happiness. The church should be a haven of good cheer and joy. It is entirely unfitting that Christian people, redeemed, from sin, companions of God, on their way to a place of unmixed joy, should spend Sunday morning in sad, solemn worship. For the fruit of the spirit is love, peace, joy, and goodness.

CHAPTER II.

RESULTS OF PREACHING.

FROM the preacher's point of view church meetings are very interesting and helpful. Being active, he enjoys it, as activity produces a feeling of well-being. Most people consider it a pleasure to speak, and the average preacher would sooner preach a long sermon than a short one. When a man is engaged in a pleasant activity, time flies quickly; and the preacher may talk for hours and the time seem only a few minutes to him. He enjoys preaching as a child enjoys playing or as some people enjoy to talk; he enjoys it whether his congregation enjoys it or not. It gives him the activity he needs, and satisfies him. The average

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preacher would preach much longer if his congregation would allow it. Coming from his books, where he has selected some ideas appealing to his mind, and oftenest a pedantic, literary effort, commonplace and monotonous, and the preacher having the belief that it is some ecclesiastic yeast. The congregation often regards it as a fog, heavy and chill, and the closing part the happy and smiling sun. One result of preaching is to deceive the preacher. Church meetings devoid of activity and happiness, consisting only of bookish sermons, are not of much use in a live world.

The average preacher always claims that the lack of success of the church, the reason that so few people join it, is because the members do not pray enough; the burden of souls do not lay heavy enough on their minds; they lack in spirituality. And so he urges the members to bring in their friends and acquaintances, for, says he, there is no inspiration in empty chairs; unless the

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seats are filled a preacher cannot do his best. When this is partly accomplished, the result is a sermon longer and duller than before, a "service" more dismal than ever.

When a church member lives a true, consistent Christian life, and takes part in the activities of the church, and has devotions at his family altar, and is anxious for the salvation of those with whom he comes in contact, then he is doing all that can reasonably be expected. Such companies of christians are generally found in every evangelical church and while they do not constitute the whole congregation, they are the ones who are always present at the meetings and on whom the burdens and responsibilities rest.

In many a community where there are thousands of men, one may find a dozen in the average evangelical church on Sunday morning and the preacher will blame them for not bringing their men friends with them. If such a preacher

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should rise early on Monday morning, and go to work in a shop as a common working man, and work regularly for some years, and put himself into the mental attitude of one who has no brighter prospect before him; then, after being shut in between walls during six days, and upon getting out in the open air on the day of freedom, the sky would seem more blue than ever before, nature would have charms which he had not noticed before, and as he goes to church, not to preach, but to listen to something about theology or about the Israelites, our preacher in the guise of a working man, after doing this patiently and regularly for some years, perhaps would get tired of it. After working together day in and day out with an open heart to their needs and struggles, the preacher might come to the conclusion that it would be un-Christlike and useless to treat the workman to a pedantic sermon. He would realize that such a

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man would be impressed by thoughts true to life, not something out of books. In the preparation of such a sermon the minister would get suggestions and inspiration from real life and he would speak as friend to friend.

Much of the preaching in the average church makes Christianity repulsive. The average pastor seems to think that the progress of the church depends on preaching only; therefore he crowds his sermons with literary matter, with the result that during its delivery some of the worshipers read the hymn-book, the younger members manage to keep up a whispering conversation, and many members are absent, knowing they thus escape misery. Delivering long, formal, bookish sermons is out of harmony with the spirit of the the gospel.

Ways and means could easily be put to work so that the congregation could have a more active part in the service, especially in smaller churches, where

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the few people and a bare, barn-like meeting house repulses the inactive hearer. This includes nearly all the city churches. Instead of reading a long chapter from the Bible and expounding it before delivering the sermon, the preacher could ask the members for short scripture passages which have come to their minds during the week and encouraged their faith and hope. Instead of having the ushers take up the collection, let the congregation walk up and drop their contribution by the pulpit, or let the minister and congregation offer up a short prayer in unison, thanking God for his goodness during the past week—or hundred other innovations to destroy monotony. When a preacher persists in going through the same old routine, year in and year out, he works contrary to the spirit and law of progress. The merchant, the manufacturer, the builder and the worker everywhere must improve with new ideas, new methods, new life, or they will not meet with success; and there

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are certainly better ways to win or attract people to the church than those in use at present which are excellent for alienating people from the church. People are impressed and attracted where there is life and action, and repulsed where there is stagnation and monotony. There is too much sedateness, too much unnatural inactivity, on the part of the listeners.

As to the sermon: the preacher should tell more about what he has heard and and seen and less about what he has read in books; tell about the person whom he met during the week, whom he tried to lead to Christ, or prayed with, perhaps. Pure religion is to visit the fatherless and afflicted, and the minister who does this will incite others to do likewise.

Preaching should instil joy, incite to godliness and kindness, help build up Christian character and build up the church, and inspire and encourage the listeners to good works.

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Because he is out of touch with common people and practical Christian work, the average preacher is ineffective. A life of ease, reading books and papers, away from people, is not a progressive life and will prevent the preacher from being useful and getting a grip on things for good.

Sometimes preachers and church workers waste words and efforts trying to close up dance-halls and kindred places in church neighborhoods. Instead of such misdirected efforts they ought to learn a lesson from the success of such institutions. They are feeling good there; action and good humor and freedom prevail. They are not required to sit down in a seat motionless and have their minds irritated and abused. New converts are often alienated from the church at the very beginning of their Christian career because they find church life so uninteresting and lifeless and unnatural—devoid of what their mental and physical life craves.

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If the preacher wishes the church services to instil more Christ-likeness, more enthusiasm, more love for things godly, then he should use methods which will help produce such results. Preaching and talk alone will never produce it; neither will scolding and commanding help. Many of the members under his charge pray for him daily, work hard to pay his salary, and do what they can heartily to reach those outside the fold. But the preacher never suggests anything on how to make the church more effective. He complains and chides because the members do not bring in more people to listen to him, and in the nature of things it is impossible for many a preacher to have a larger congregation than he has. He is not able to irritate more people. Nobody can be found in the community who has the patience to endure the church meetings.

Most pastors get into the habit of preaching in an unnatural and often a

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boisterous voice, and through the whole service there is nothing which suggests pleasantness or cheer. God taught the birds to sing and the brook to make music as it flows. Neither was it man who told the colt to play in the meadow, and the lambs to make their antics on the hills. God scattered smiling flowers all over the earth and sends sunbeams to caress our cheeks. Pleasantness is not something of no importance. It is the sunshine of the mind and necessary to health and well-being. Deprived of it the mind may be ruined. Christian people should be pleasant people and the church services should incite to this.

There are people going away from church services with a bitter feeling in their minds, with a hatred for the preaching-house. There was enough of ennui and dullness, but nothing to give gladness or to suggest a foretaste of the joy to come. Once more in God's open, the listener feels glad, as if he had emerged from a humid underground.

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When God made nature he made it beneficial and pleasant, but when man builds a church he makes it dark and jail-like. Many a congregation puts up a costly, cold building, mortgages it, and scolds and begs for more money, and has use for one-fourth of the seats only, while it ought to have bought fewer stones, and taken possession of more of God's earth and planted a garden where flowers might grow and children play on the green, and where on pleasant Sundays in summer the people might sing and the preacher tell the eternal truths. Or where on hot summer evenings a tent could be put up, where people would feel comfortable, and thus make it easier for outsiders, who seldom enter churches. To men who labor in black foundries and women compelled to hustle in sweat shops and youths working nervously in offices and stores, the invitation, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good," does not sound true, coming from the average church.

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The revivalist may be the means of winning hundreds, but it is for the local church by its work to retain these converts. The meetings on the common Sunday and the church's programme during the week are of the greatest importance, and the minister who can put new life and originality into this neglected field and maintain a healthy interest and growth is doing a far greater work than the revivalist.

Our present standards of work is not advancing. Most preachers insist upon using archaic methods and neglect the opportunity to inspire and encourage the listener to more usefulness. There are enough thoughts and efforts wasted every day to turn the world into a paradise.

CHAPTER III.

THE REASONABLE SERVICE.

It is work that has made civilization—work coupled with thinking has made living more comfortable and life more pleasant. Work has a healthful effect on the mind, in that it develops reason and sanity and gives clearness to thinking. Work makes for progress, well-being and optimism. There is something in work that gives health to the mind and body, and there is something in idleness that has a degenerating effect, in that it befogs thinking, dulls the reason and leads to melancholy. Most preachers get into an unnatural way of living by avoiding effort and work, which makes them unreasonable in their methods

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and ineffective. Christ did not tell his disciples to go out in all the world and read books and lead inactive lives, but to go to every creature with the gospel. If human beings are worth anything, it ought to be worth the minister's while to go and make an effort to influence people during the common weekday. Christ walked a long way in order that he might speak to some person of the lowest class. A man with an immortal soul ought to be worth an effort for the higher life, ought to be worth a kind word in Christ's name. Thoughtful work and enterprise are necessary in order to accomplish anything. To improve a machine, or make an invention that will make labor easier or living more comfortable may well be worth a man's arduous endeavor. To affect the human mind for good, to plant in it a seed of inspiration, to affect it so it will desire the highest life, the christian life may well be considered the most important work in the world.

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Often right in the preacher's neighborhood live people wrapped in sin—men, slaves to liquor, gambling or other habits; homes where happiness is unknown; youths reckless on the downward path. But the preacher is often a stranger to real conditions. On the avenue, thick with saloons, where men congregate and carouse, someone is sick of sin. Many a member of his congregation would be glad to go with the minister, trying to win a man for the better life.

The community might be divided into districts, the members go two and two trying to reach each household. This does not mean that results always will be certain. Man can but sow and God give the increase; and sometimes a Christian will make a call and a neighbor or stranger in the house will be influenced. Neither should such efforts be done with the direct purpose of gaining members for the church. Where a church and its minister put forth

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earnest and sincere efforts in a Christ-like, cheerful way, there will always be some results. Godliness, unselfish love and devotion to righteousness will always impress. Ungodly people know they are wrong.

There is life in work and death in idleness. The preacher who will impress people with life must mix with humanity. There can be no progress without work. There is a spirit of stagnation and doubt in the church where no effort is made to reach the outsider. Working people are always quick to say that preachers want to live soft lives at the expense of the toiler. In cities one may find the preacher during the week spending his time in the park, playing games of tennis, croquet and the like, or in his home on the sofa, while the members of his church toil in the heat of the day, long hours, to pay the preacher's salary and he then scold them on Sunday.

When working people labor every day in the week they crave rest and relaxation

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in their spare time. Too many preachers call their two sermons on Sunday, work. To get up before a congregation and repeat something read in books is not work.

Christ was a worker. He learned a trade. He went to meet people at their daily work. But nowadays a preacher cannot try to influence people unless he gets on his clerical garb and gets into the pulpit.

The average preacher is ineffective because the hearers feel that he is foreign to them—does not know their daily life and their struggles. Sermons devoid of human interest, with no suggestions to useful action, have no influence on live people. He who does not work generally becomes unsympathetic, unreasonable, impractical and gloomy; his soul and mind losing the healthy vision.

People are influenced by what they admire, and people will always admire honesty and sincerity. The minister who has been earnestly at work during

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the week, trying to win a soul for Christ, or has labored to make the church more useful, will make a far deeper impression on his hearers than he who has spent his time in reading.

In the public libraries one may find tramps reading the latest magazines, and they remain tramps. In the church-study the preacher reads, while the church goes backward. The effective minister is never a book-lover, but a lover of humanity.

The listener can always easily notice whether the preacher is a worker. Things look dark to the idler. The inactive preacher believes that Christianity is fast disappearing from the earth. He is in doubt about the church under his charge and is considering to leave before it gets "run down" too much. His mind is in harmony with his body. Idleness breeds conceit. Some preachers consider themselves hard workers because they talk very rapid when they preach, and sometimes even perspire; or that

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they make a hundred calls during the year. They like to talk about the "Christless age," and "that there shall be a falling away." Their sermons are morose and gloomy, and they complain that they do not get sympathy and support.

There is satisfaction in good work. He who performs it will be respected and esteemed, but he cares not for that, he does not work for that purpose. The beggar for sympathy, like other beggars, is not a worker.

The worker is always hopeful. He knows that honest work cannot fail. Where the idler sees only dark despair the worker sees the light of opportunity. Work is perplexing and annoying, but it is necessary. Improvements in machines and methods are made by workers. He who does not work sees no need of improvements. We can only learn by serving. Edison became a servant of electricity and wrought wonders. The real useful people in the church are those who will gladly do the humble, inauspi-

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cious work, such as teaching the most insignificant class in the Bible school, and do it faithfully and earnestly, or help wherever they are needed. For he who would do any uplifting must get underneath. Those who are anxious to hold office, and direct and rule, who want to gratify personal ambition and selfishness, the baser desires of the mind are not of much help.

No business enterprise could exist for one month on the principles on which the average preacher expects the church under his charge to prosper. He wastes too much valuable time and expects the miraculous to happen. Making an effort now and then and not seeing immediate results, he stops. Business firms do not give up that way. A salesman does not sell to everyone he calls upon. A mail-order business knows that only a percentage of catalogs brings orders. But they do business by keeping everlastingly at it, every day, and by putting new life and new improvements into

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their work and methods, benefiting their customers and keeping things moving.

Instead of attending the ministers meeting on Monday, where they come to listen to something of no consequence, and then idle around in book stores in the afternoon, they should start in at actual work, either in getting in personal contact with those leading ungodly lives, or making the church's work more effective and far reaching. A multitude of features could be put to work which would accomplish results.

Work coupled with sincerity and godliness cannot fail. There is no formulary plan that will work without being coupled with personal enthusiasm and a little originality.

The preacher who is in love with his work, and is anxious to help someone to the higher life—would rather do this than anything else—will find a way to reach people. One of the most successful ministers in Chicago had a way of hailing a teamster in the street, and get

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on the wagon and have a talk as they drove along. It is of more importance to influence a single individual than to read books or attend conventions. By working with people a man gets insight and sympathy. A bookish preacher's sermons are like cast iron seeds planted in the soil. One reason why men do not attend church is because pedantic sermons are not worth listening to.

According to God's laws many a church ought not make any progress; for nowhere in this world can a man get results without effort. Some actual time, every day, should be used by the preacher in getting in touch with someone who is not a Christian. How to work in a natural, godly way is the one thing above all the student ought to learn in the theological seminary. Every church would grow if the preacher would work. But if a minister will not use any of his time to get in contact with unconverted people, he ought to go to work in shop or field; for reading a little, delivering a sermon or

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two on Sunday, taking a long vacation, and seek ease are things of no value. Some preachers have peculiar ideas about work. I have known some who think that labor is a disgrace. Other preachers have an idea that if they went to work, it would be sensational. Only the other day I heard a preacher in his prayer thank God for a life of ease. God created man for work. For that reason he was given muscles, brains and limbs; and man cannot be sound, mentally and physically unless mind and muscles are exercised by work.

Neither can the church be healthy and grow unless reasonable work is done. Both minister and members ought to realize this. Besides meetings of inspiration and uplift systematic work as much as possible is necessary. Some evening might be used as a "working evening" when members would go out to personal work.

For God does not let the miraculous happen in church work any more than

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in agriculture or business. If the farmer should spend his time in prayer and neglect to plow, sow and harrow, his praying would be blasphemy. But there are preachers who believe that reading and idling are sufficient to bring the church to success. It can not be expected that working people should be enthusiastic in supporting a church by their hard earned money when the preacher spends his time in inactivity.

A minister needs preparation so that he may be fit to sit beside the sick-bed of him who needs spiritual aid. But the average preacher has only a few such cases during the year. He needs time for devotion so that his spiritual life may grow. But if he does not work and has never any hardships, his preaching will not influence working people. Such a preacher rather creates a gulf between the listener and himself. Filled with a week's accumulated energy, he preaches to his people, wishing to arouse them. He feels that there is something wrong.

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Somebody has not been doing his duty. His sermon is full of denunciation and irritation. He complains that they are only playing at religion.

The listener, coming from labor and hardship, is tired mentally and physically; perplexed, perhaps with problems of life and work. His mind revolts at irritation. The average listener is not a hypocrite; and his life is an endeavor to do the best he can. If the church service throws a light upon his road that shows him a brighter life, he will appreciate it.

The minister who works earnestly and sincerely does not feel like denouncing working people on Sunday. One of the qualities of manhood is that a man loves work; his mind being open to truth and progress which open up avenues to improvement and betterment.

If the minister would work rational and with half as much energy as the average workingman, and actually put a certain few hours each day at actual work, the churches would succeed where

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they now make no progress. It is the steady, conscientious work, every day, which counts. Preaching is not hard work, because all preachers dislike to preach short sermons. One of the most sickening things is to see a preacher who will advocate that a church be closed and a field abandoned rather than work for it. A church can succeed anywhere if the right and true kind of work is done. A preacher should be honest enough to work for the church that pays his salary. A life without work is a worthless life. God's law is: no efforts, no results. Efforts or work done by a rational Christian worker is never a total failure. The more efforts and work the church puts forth the more it will succeed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

THE average evangelical church receives its life stream from the Sunday-school in that eighty or ninety per cent of new members joining the church come from the Sunday-school. This is only a repetition of a well-known fact, familiar to everyone intimate with church work. Those joining the church in their youth generally become the most faithful and efficient members, making them the salt of the earth.

That children and youths become converted more readily than older people seem a most pleasant fact. A church filled with young people ought to be a place of the highest inspiration. Young

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people, more fresh from God and less influenced by wrong-doing than older people, are certainly the greatest force in the church. Another encouraging fact in the Sunday-school is that often the most regular attendants there are children whose parents have no church connections.

The Sunday-school, then, being of first importance, it is hard to understand why its work and possibilities are often ignored by the minister, who frequently knows less about it than the humblest teacher there. There can be no easier and more natural way in reaching parents than through their children. And there is no better way in getting in touch with life and the spirit of the age than to know young people.

It would be well if the minister's training could include practical work in the Sunday-school, teaching a class of boys for a length of time in order that he might learn to see the Sunday-school from a boy's point of view. A preacher

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should not work from the top down, but from the bottom up. There is not much to learn at the top.

The dominant note of the exercises directed from the platform in the average Sunday-school is too often one of scolding and irritating. During the singing the children are chided between each stanza, either because they do not sing heartily, do not smile, or other like shortcomings and thus the leader creates an atmosphere of ugliness, jarring and abusing the minds of the children. Too often there is an absence of the Christ-like spirit for which the school is organized. That some children get up early in the morning, often walking a long distance in order to attend the school, and are sometimes jeered by their companions for doing so, ought to be an inspiration to any Christian worker and make him anxious that the children should feel something of the godly atmosphere and not go away with a picture in their minds of something ugly and dis-

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pleasing. Most children like to sing, but not when they are irritated between each stanza of a song,

As to teaching, many teachers are too fluent in language, and preach instead of teach with the result that a class is often doing other things instead of listening. Too few teachers aim to stimulate the scholars to activity. The class that feels that the teacher has some of the sacrificing, unselfish spirit of the Master, is generally faithful to the school year in and year out.

As the preacher cries for more hearers so does the superintendent at the closing exercises beg for more scholars. "Did anyone bring a new scholar to-day? Remember the prize you get for every new scholar you bring." Thus he continually urges, that the school may grow larger. To make the exercises more worthy, more cheerful, helpful and reverent, never seems to occur to him. He is like a storekeeper with unsalable goods crying for customers.

The children are again urged to attend the church service. But the morning church service is a sad, solemn occasion, with a graveyard atmosphere and pedantic preaching, and not an expression of the joy and cheer of the Christian life. And, after attending Sunday-school for an hour or two, and during the week been enclosed within store or shop, the big boy, with his ideas of truth and goodness, cannot understand why he should spend half the Sunday within dark walls listening to something about the Israelites. God gave him a nature with a craving for life and action, and the church offers lethargy and gloom. His growing mind craves joyousness and cheer; but the evangelical preacher denounces all worldly amusements, dancing, theater, and the like. Did God make a mistake when he created the adolescent mind with a hunger for gladness and activity? Only the other day I heard a preacher, with some renown as a revivalist, in speaking to a Sunday-school, say: "Young

people, I want to impress on your minds the fact that it is your duty to attend all the services of the church, and pay reverent attention to the pastor when he preaches. For any one of you to show listlessness during the sermon is very discourteous and is a sin. If the pastor should preach for six hours and any one of you show impatience, you would be guilty of disrespect for the house of God, and your conduct would be very wrong." Such statements by a graduate of a theological seminary, and a D. D. go to show what heights of delusions a "divine" can reach. But this describes the mind of the average preacher. The children and youths in the Sunday-school do not relish preachments foreign to life, and therefore, they are wicked.

Religious instruction is necessary in order for anyone to become a Christian, and for youths to attain the highest type of manhood and womanhood the Christian life is needed. But preacher and teacher ought to realize that no young

person will hurry in glad anticipation to a place where inactivity and dullness awaits him. Many a youth has to work hard during the week, sometimes under sordid conditions; the long hours passing wearily. But in his mental world there is a star shining: on Sunday, when the week's hardship is over, there is a circle of friends, of which he is a part, where freedom and happiness abound, where he will enjoy life for a moment.

While too much ease and pleasure and too little work often is ruinous to character;, on the other hand parents may commit a crime against their children by shutting out all joy. There are many homes which are far from what they ought to be, where children are compelled to grow up under a cloud of mental stress or compelled to work long hours, all of which gives a dark tint to life.

The boy may keep on attending the Sunday-school until his sixteenth year, but at this age the dullness of the church repulses him. He joins a ball team, an

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athletic club, becomes a dancer or anything that will keep him active. A revolution is taking place in his mind as it begins to grow into manhood, and he craves association and action.

The inability of the talkative preacher and teacher to realize the position of the inactive listener is the cause of most unsuccessful church efforts.

However, the Sunday-school is made possible because of the faithful teachers, who give out of their unselfish love, have found a way to interest the scholars, so that they come regularly, year in and year out.

Many a preacher makes a mistake by not interesting himself in the efforts of the Sunday-school. A few simple things every minister could do, such as have the names and addresses of scholars and their parents and pray for and visit them, or other efforts to make the work of the school more effective.

Those who wish to help the bible-school to be more effective must do so along the

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lines of God's laws that govern the human mind.

Most youths leave the public school in their fifteenth year and then often follows a period of intellectual and spiritual darkness. But more or less the average youth has also a hunger after truth and right and where the church and Sunday-school does earnest work they often attract and hold the best youths in the community.

CHAPTER V.

THE LISTENER'S DUTY.

Most preachers lay great stress on duty, stating that it is a man's duty to help sustain public worship as the church is beneficial to the community, and some even go so far as to say that people ought to be taxed to support a church. They might as well argue that people who refuse to support good newspapers and good grocery stores ought to be taxed.

As the chief officer of the church, the preacher exhorts his listeners to be active in Christian work, to teach a class in the Sunday-school, but he does not teach a class there himself, nor does he try to influence any youths away from downward path in his own neighborhood.

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He exhorts his listeners to bring their unconverted friends to the meetings, yet for years he may not bring a single one himself.

He commands his hearers to read the Bible, yet his whole sermon is devoid of scripture, leaving the impression that he has not meditated on a single passage during the week.

He denounces his listeners for robbing God. They are not paying enough into the church treasury; yet he idles his time away during the week, not trying to win a single soul for the kingdom, or in any way to make the church services more attractive and winsome.

There comes a time to the average preacher when he decides that his congregation needs a special stirring up. He reasons after this fashion: The church is not making any progress and the members are entirely to blame. They do not do their duty, are not as earnest and godly as they ought to be, do not listen to my sermons as they should. This is

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the truth, and I am going to preach the truth; and then on Sunday follows a sermon denouncing and scolding the members which only serves to irritate them. The membership in every church is made up of some who gladly do all they can, and others who are not as active and earnest. Not any in these two classes are inspired or made enthusiastic by having their minds harrowed; but some are made colder and discouraged by it. It is not a man's duty to go and have his mind irritated and harrassed; rather, the average sane man generally avoids all the misery he can.

Much that is childish has been said about leadership. "The church should move like an army, every member obeying the commands of the leader in front," said an egotistical preacher in his sermon the other day. This is in harmony with what is taught in theological schools and clerical literature, which emphasize that a preacher is to be a leader of men, and that people are waiting for a leader.

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As Washington Gladden says: "We have churches which profess democracy, but there is reason to fear that many of them are little better than oligarchies, some of them come near being monarchies." Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty and not bossism. To the average man a church is always repulsive where he is made to feel that they want to command him, want to make him a follower, to walk behind a leader. A desire to command does not make a man a leader. The more a preacher is interested in himself, the less he will be able to arouse interest in the cause he represents. He, with the spirit of the lowly Nazarene, will be a leader, but will be unconscious of it. We are influenced by the people whom we admire, they are our leaders.

There are people in every church whom it is an inspiration to meet, whose Christian characters and rich hearts warm us, who give us new joy and strengthen our faith. Christianity has

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produced a certain type of admirable people. Some of the most precious pictures that we carry in memory's gallery are of such people.

The sincere Christian does not go to church from a sense of duty. God is not pleased with a worshiper who is impelled by duty. The Christian worker who should say: "I hate to teach that class or speak to that unconverted person, but I suppose it is my duty," would be unfit to make the effort.

People, burdened with sorrow, crushed with disappointment and worried with the perplexities of life, often enter a church in search of a ray from above, only to listen to a preacher, fresh from a week's idleness, scolding because people come short of their duty. And more than one listener asks himself: "Am I honest in helping support a church that only irritates and abuses?" How different from the spirit of the Master, whose invitation was not, "Come unto me and I will add to your load."

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How to make the services worthy, so that the listener might profit, yea, be inspired, ought to be the minister's anxiety, but unless he is a worker with humanity this will never occur to him.

It was not because God saw that men came short of their duty that he sent his son into the world to demonstrate they were sinners. The gospel is represented in the Bible as a feast, not punishment, a gift of God to be taken, not a duty to be performed, a power that draws, not something to be driven to. It is the minister's opportunity to create desire for more. Godliness is the most beautiful thing in the world, but he who wants to force it on people makes it appear ugly and repulsive.

It is the minister's opportunity to leave in the listener's minds a picture of his Christian character, his sincere devotion to righteousness, his unselfishness and anxiety for the progress of the gospel, his opportunity to instill joy and inspire love for things godly. He may have to

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sacrifice his desire to talk in order to do this. It would be well if the listener could go away wishing that the services had been longer, thus creating a desire for more.

It should be the listener's opportunity to be a worker together with the minister in the cause which they both love; to help serve someone; to add to the joy of some life. The minister should train and encourage the listener to be useful.

Religious papers of most denominations echo the preacher's complaints that church people are not doing their duty and for that reason there is no progress, never saying a word about the preachers, the majority of whom oppress their listeners with burdensome church services, and indolent lives. Working people throughout the country have long since tired of religious taskmasters.

The world is moving forward, getting more pleasant and helpful, and the preacher who commands and irritates his listeners is archaic and un-Christlike.

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It is by a strange way of reasoning that some preachers arrive at the conclusion that it is the hearer's duty to be delighted with a service regardless of its quality. The other day a minister told me some of his struggles in a western State where he held several charges, and where the people, in his opinion, treated him shamefully. I have listened to this brother preach; he has a way of thundering out, in a harsh voice, the most shallow and commonplace statements, and keeps this up at great length, which requires the utmost patience on the part of the listener.

Another preacher has a habit of being in ill humor on Sunday morning, his sermon is a mixture of gloom and scolding and there is nothing in it that suggests Christliness, kindness, refinement or any of the other higher qualities which people expect to meet with in a church service.

Another preacher complains that his hearers are inattentive during his long

prayers and sermons. But this preacher's prayers are composed of preaching and oratory. Prayer is intended for the ear of God. No one should preach to God. There is hardly a person but what is glad to listen to sermons and prayers when they are of the right quality.

Another preacher's sermons are composed of extremely rambling thoughts, and a few minutes after he has started his audience is all inattention; but that does not concern him, he keeps on in the same way. He deplores the fact that working people attend places of amusement on Sunday and he believes that laws ought to be enacted to get somewhat of a Puritan Sunday.

The above examples can be multiplied; they all prove that the obstacles of which most preachers complain lie within themselves. Christ's method of teaching was in harmony with the God-given laws that govern the human mind. The average preacher's method is not.

In almost any work on mental science

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one may read statements to this effect.

“Functioning of the brain is brought about by efforts of attention; compelling the brain cells to focus themselves on the matter in hand.

“It is a well known fact that the blood vessels of the cortex of the brain are flushed and dilated by the presence of cheerfulness, and the toning and stimulating influence is conveyed by the life-giving blood and nerve-current to every tissue of the body.

“Pleasant emotions increase the flow of gastric juice. The same effect too is produced on the bowels so that constipation is often due to depressing emotions. Emotions are either elevating or depressing. Elevating emotions have a beneficial effect on the mind and bodily function.”

Therefore, when a preacher emphasizes that it is man's duty to attend gloomy, dismal church seryices, man's instincts, the make-up of his mind, convince him to the contrary.

The human mind can be likened to an

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explorer. Around about him lies a land of mystery. He has arrived at this point somewhat bewildered and perplexed. He looks about for some place where he may quench his thirst and rest.

Show him Christ and it sufficeth him.

CHAPTER VI.

THINGS GREATER THAN WORDS.

It is a mistake to believe that preaching always incites to godliness. A man's character speaks louder than his words. It requires love to incite love. The disciples felt well in the company of Christ. They were glad when then saw him. Oftenest church people are glad when the preacher gets through with his mass of words, Christ was not a dealer in words. His love, sympathy, kindness and humility crop out and have far more effect than words. The disciples felt that he loved them, loved them to the end. They noticed he had compassion on the multitude. At the passover he told them, out of the fulness of his heart,

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that he had greatly desired to eat that meal with them. In washing his disciples feet a lesson in humility and service was taught much better than could be done by words. Some of his disciples, after spending a night of work at fishing—a night of bad luck—are surprised by seeing Christ on the shore where he had built a fire, baked fish and bread and told them to come and dine. Christ made no mistake in thus inculcating the spirit of service and love; but the modern church loses its opportunity by becoming cold and mechanical. For example: the mid-week prayer-meeting. Many a preacher lectures at that meeting; forgetting that he has before him the same people who listened to him twice on Sunday. With a longing desire for spiritual and practical results the minister and people should meet. To illustrate: arrange the chairs in a circle, have the piano in the center and commence by singing the best songs in the hymn book. After being seated the minister and people might talk as

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friend to friend about the joy of salvation, the spread of the gospel and God's goodness. One touch of kindness will do more to inspire a member than a thousand lectures. Let there be equality. Let everyone have a chance to say a word or two. Some time might be given to short prayers and testimonies; but if some talk-loving individual should get started with no end in sight, let someone go and in a kindly manner remind him that he is taking the time of someone else and preventing them from taking part.

One of the greatest forces in a man's life is the influence of his friends. At what time does a man receive more encouragement, pleasure and joy than when meeting his friends? The average person does not go to a church where he has no friends. And the new convert who fails to find friends in the church will soon be found elsewhere. Social intercourse, friend meeting friend, is one of the attractions of the average church. And yet most of the preachers whom I know

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believe in discouraging social intercourse at the end of the meetings because they think it takes away the spirituality the sermon produced. A preacher may as well go out in his garden and take away the effect of sunshine on a flower by talking to it. The human mind retains what it once receives; the influence of genuine godliness, truth and goodness is never lost. I carry in my mind the influence of some Christly, true minister. I cherish it. I count it among the best joys of my life to have listened to him. His influence is part of my mental property.

Often I have heard preachers make announcements on this order at the close of their evening sermons: "We shall have an after-meeting; those who wish to stay will take the forward seats at once; those who must go will go out as quickly and quietly as possible. Do not stay in the aisles and hallway and talk; and on your way home speak only about spiritual things." The preacher in this way tries to accomplish by force, that which he

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cannot accomplish otherwise, as his sermon has been without the Christly spirit.

People are influenced by what they do in thought, act and deed. The less active a man is in the church and its work, the less hold the church has upon him, and less is he influenced by it. Preaching often is devoid of purpose and power to affect minds; but what a man says and does himself always affects his being, his brain cells and nervous system. To influence people ought to be the minister's purpose. In order to do this he must have learned to work himself. As Russell H. Conwell says: "The one secret of life and development is not to devise and plan but to fall in line with the forces at work." To learn the art of doing good in a natural way.

Graduating from a theological seminary the preacher often knows less about common people and how to work with them than he did before going there; and often he has no desire in that direction. I have known young preachers to keep at their

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books with all their zeal, after getting a pastorate, in order that they might get the title of D. D., while all around them human beings were going downward without a single effort being made to reach them; nor did they try to make the church service worthy of the name. We go to church to worship God, but most preachers leave the impression that they have been worshipping some book or paper during the week. The theological seminary ought to interest the preacher in something higher than books.

There is something about all good preachers which makes it a pleasure to listen to them, and it was said about the greatest of all that the common people heard him gladly. Not that the preacher pleased for the sake of pleasing, but because his hearers felt the joy of his soul, his unselfishness and sincerity. His message was an invitation to the very heaven. The true minister makes his hearers desire Christ. And the things which have the greatest influence on a

man's life are his desires and aspirations.

People are influenced by facts. Religion through the ages, has influenced people for the better. Nothing has had so much influence for good in the world as Christianity. The teaching of the godly qualities—righteousness, truth, purity and holiness—is needed and will always influence people. Christianity has produced some of the noblest and best people on earth. Every time a minister preaches he has an opportunity to influence his hearers for good, to inspire and encourage and suggest more of the richness of the Christian life. Every meeting of Christians should be helpful and useful. Jesus went about doing good, and even on the cross, when suffering indescribable he used the time to give kindness to his enemies and encouragement to his friends.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

HE who ignores the Creator's laws ignores God. The worker on minds is not exempt from obeying natural laws any more than workers in other departments of effort. The fabric of the listener's mind, the God-given mind, should constitute some of the ground work for the preacher to build upon. Working peoples' minds, after toil and hardship do not need irritation and monotony, but joy and inspiration. God has so created the human mind. The meetings of Christians ought to abound in those things which make a heaven on earth. Heaven is a place of joy, song and well-being. But the preacher with a great desire to talk

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has no atmosphere of heaven about him.

If the worker on minds works rationally, sincerely and godly, he is bound to accomplish results as well as the worker in iron and wood. Natural laws are the worker's opportunity. Here is a lake to cross—build a boat. Here is electricity to harness—make a motor. Here is a flock of people to influence—let them be active. Happiness and well-being in life come from rational and pleasant activity. Influence people for good. Encourage, inspire, incite good will and good cheer. This cannot be accomplished by talking. The minister with the Christ-like character only will be able to do this. In the average church there is too much harassing, too much one-man power, too much tiresome preaching of no consequence, too much stagnation. Most preachers criticize and complain too much, blaming the members for not doing their duty, while they themselves, waste most of their time during the week doing nothing of any practical nature.

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God has so created the human mind that it craves variety in order to retain health. A person may go insane by focusing his mind continuously upon one thing. For the Christian who is dead to the world and its pleasures, and who seeks joy in the church, always to be listening to the preacher's voice is mentally unhealthy, and often painful. While nothing can take the place of the sermon, the preaching of righteousness in love, more variety and the co-operation of the congregation is necessary.

If the preacher wants the members of his church to be more enthusiastic about it and to invite their acquaintances to the services the meetings ought to be attractive and worthy. People gladly give of their time and money to what they love. If the church does not make as much progress as the preacher wishes he should not scold and complain about it, but state in a plain, business-like way the constructive program he wishes the church to carry out. Working people who spend

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their strength every day in labor, crave some rest and recreation in their spare time, however, most members will gladly help if the minister would utilize them. Many a member or group of members would be glad to be responsible for advertising the services if the minister would start them. God is exalted by good work sincerely done. The preacher is a worker, and like workers in other fields, he may succeed or fail, it depends on how the work is done. Some preachers do not seem to pay attention to the results of their efforts. They do not aim to do anything practical. Their sermons do not inspire and convince. The work of the church is to do good. The services should benefit the listener. The preacher might scrutinize his efforts by asking himself: Are the people better for it? Does it add to their happiness? Does it incite to the higher, truer and richer life? The preacher might learn by sometimes trying the listener's part by attending church service where he is un-

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known, and reflect if there is not room for improvement.

The history of successful churches everywhere teaches that it is not fine church property or money that is needed; the right kind of spirit and the right kind of work must first be present, and then people will gladly support it.

I have often heard preachers make appeals for more hearers, and urge the members to be more earnest in bringing in the unconverted. Those preachers ought to pray for more common sense to improve the opportunities given them at every meeting. To raise the efficiency of the services. Such preachers are not workers, and have not a clear conception of things, they are generally irrational in their methods.

Many men do not make any mental progress after reaching maturity. Often the sermons of a preacher of fifty, will be no improvement over those he preached when twenty-five years younger. He is just as mechanical, and fails to strike the sym-

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thetic chord. He does not learn to work with common people and to be helpful and rational. Most preachers as they grow in years become very fluent in speaking. Excessive preaching tends to starve the brain cells and to retard the function of the heart of both preacher and hearer.

After working hard during the week—perhaps at work which makes the world seem dark and dreary—the working man is apt to go where his mind can meet with some reciprocity, be it but in a saloon where he can be a fellow, he feels at least the bond of sympathy. Men are guided largely by their feelings; and crave to feel *en rapport* with their fellowmen. The saloon and kindred places are overflowing with this feeling. Here is liberty, ease and activity, which are necessary for fellowship. Here a man mingles with friends, and feels the joy of living. He is a part of the life of the crowd, a good fellow well met. Here his money flows without stint, and here he

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tarries without looking at the clock.

The pulpit produces feelings of bossism; the listener is made to feel that he is to be a sheep and to be guided and directed. The tendency of the preacher is to become egotistical with a childish desire to command. Development and welfare in life come from activity; but preaching and church service train people in silence and inactivity.

The Christ-like minister would be glad to lose himself in the services and have the co-operation of the members. He would be glad to have them give suggestions and help in making the services more useful. For, to get closer to God does not mean to get farther away from humanity. To illustrate: have all the men possible sing in the choir on a Sunday evening and advertise it as a "men's night." Also have a "women's evening," with women ushers. Let the choir sing a couple of hymns after the sermon with the congregation remaining seated. Before the sermon on Sunday evening

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let ten minutes be used by the congregation in quoting scripture passages; in this time more than twenty-five people could take part, and would leave an impression of the Christian life in the hearts of men on the stranger, perhaps, as much as the rest of the service. The sermon by the pastor is only the testimony of one; with twenty-five more taking part it would be twenty-five times stronger. Most preachers are stingy with the singing, while it is that which produces joy and cheer. People are influenced more by what they do than by what they are told. Let them be as active as possible. Let them feel that they are wanted. Many people stay away from church services because they are discouraged and perplexed.

Some preachers labor under the mistaken idea that they are not appreciated, while the real trouble is they have not learned to work with people. Members who are the most regular in attending the meetings are oftenest those who have

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something to do, It is unnatural for a person to be where he has no part to perform. It is the minister's opportunity to incite the listener to usefulness.

Some preachers over-emphasize the problems of the church by getting narrow ideas from the study of psychology and mental science. One preacher said: "Peoples' minds differ, some like an emotional sermon, others an intellectual, others a doctrinal, etc." There are scores of ways of appealing to the human mind, and there are no such things as strictly emotional or strictly intellectual minds. Minds differ, but they also have much in common. There is something everyone likes, and something everyone hates. Everyone likes a joy-bringer; everyone likes sincerity, likes unselfishness, likes song and cheer. Everyone hates egotism, hates insincerity, hates to listen to long prayers and dull or ugly sermons.

The predominant hunger in the human mind everywhere is the hunger for the

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beauty of righteousness and truth—the hunger for the beauty of godliness.

People are easily attracted. Happiness, good will, honesty and joy are catching. Going away from a meeting where there was a lot of song, cheer and the Christly spirit, the effect remains with the listener permanently.

The preacher's talk and character produce feelings in the listener's mind, and feelings produce decisions. A narrow, selfish spirit is repulsive, and where it is manifest in a church service many a hearer goes away with the resolve, not to enter the place again. On the other hand, a Christly, unselfish, largeminded, manly minister who proclaim the spiritual truths in firmness and love, will unconsciously draw out the best qualities in his hearers and develop them into helpers. Such a minister is the most useful and most needed man in the world today.

The city that lies on a hill can not be hid. If the church has some of the quali-

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ties of its founder, the people will see and feel it. If it deserves success it will succeed. But insincerity and indolence ought to fail.

The church is needed. The greatest wrong, the one thing that produces the most misery and pain in the world, is still sin. In the light of eternity, religious instruction is of the highest importance. People need instruction in righteousness and truth, and incitement to holiness. The church ought to be the most attractive and most alive place in the community.

The church has a monopoly on the best things in the world. It is the only institution in the community where people can meet with teachings which are of eternal importance.

The purpose of religion is to make people truer and happier; and the business of the church is to do good. The church stands for the highest and best in the community—the place where the truest thoughts and best impulses are born in the minds of men. Christianity

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has produced the best people in the world. The character produced by a Christian life is far above that produced by culture or education.

One of the charms of church meetings is that here people meet with the purpose to strive after holiness and promulgate Christianity. There is something in religious teaching and godly worship which appeal to the best people. For behind the material in the human mind, there is a spiritual existence which needs development.

Therefore the preacher and worker in the church should use the noblest and best methods—the greatest good for the greatest number—and the things which prevent the church from doing this can be stated in a few sentences:

The sermons are too lengthy.

There are no efforts made to improve the services or the work of the church.

Most preachers tend to become isolated instead of working with their people.

Many preachers wish to become ora-

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tors instead of doing real work, and thus become superficial.

As to the church-members, the average working men and women are trying to do the best they can, ever willing to work and sacrifice for the church and with a little inspiration will be willing to do even more. My experience has been that I have received so much kindness, courtesy and inspiration that I will never be able to repay it.

But among the burdens sometimes placed on working people is that of having to support a minister who persists in using wrong methods; and who, weak in faith does not work earnestly, and is afraid that theory of evolution, the theatre, saloon and cheap show-house, or any other of the lower forces, will overcome the greatest power for good, the highest and best institution on earth—the church of Jesus Christ.





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